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SUBJECT: EUROPEAN UNION EFFORTS TO COUNTER MUSLIM RADICALIZATION

#### SUMMARY

¶1. (U) The European Union (EU), with the European Commission at the forefront, has made several advances in the past six months in addressing the topic of Muslim radicalization and related terrorism. The Commission has revised its Plan of Action on Combating Terrorism, or Action Plan, as it does under every Council Presidency, first released in June 2004. In a change from previous years, to inform the latest update to the Action Plan, the Commission requested four academic studies, which were released in late 2008. These studies analyzed trends of radicalization leading to terrorism from various angles. The Commission has also established a European Network of Experts on Radicalization (ENER) and begun experimental models in member states to establish best practices. The Treaty of Lisbon has the potential to change decision-making procedures on European radicalization and terrorism policy significantly. END SUMMARY

#### UPDATING THE ACTION PLAN

¶2. (U) Under every Council Presidency, the Commission revises its Plan of Action on Combating Terrorism, or Action Plan, first released in June 2004. Crimes involving incitement (especially over the Internet), recruitment, and bomb-making have recently been added to the plan. Four academic studies, two from The Change Institute in London and one each from the King's College in London and the Compagnie Europeenne d'Intelligence Stratgique (CEIS) in Paris, were conducted on behalf of the European Commission from 2006-2007. The studies analyzed the ideological underpinnings of violent radicalization, methods to recruit and mobilize violent radicals, youth radicalization, and civil society's role in responding to radicalization. The research findings helped the EU develop a coherent and effective counter-terrorism strategy which was included in the Action Plan. Although the Commission relied heavily on the studies, they were not legally bound to any of the recommendations.

#### COMMISSION INITIATIVES

¶3. (U) The Commission also created a European Network of Experts on Radicalization (ENER) which includes several U.S. experts. The group met as recently as February 1. Its role is to study radicalization and terrorism policy and present its findings to member states and EU institutions. Dutch experts, for example, recently presented to the Council findings from a six-city project on local-level engagement of diaspora youth. The ENER is currently a closed network (with exceptions for U.S. experts), but may eventually become an open network for wider communication.

¶4. (SBU) To facilitate coordination and implementation, member states assume different responsibilities under the Action Plan. For example, the United Kingdom focuses on the communication sector, especially the negative portrayal of Muslims in the media. An official of the Directorate-General for Justice, Freedom, and Security's (JLS) Unit on Terrorism cited the UK's efforts to de-sensationalize communications about Muslim communities and develop healthy communication strategies among religious groups. Other projects include outreach to religious leaders in Spain, internet surveillance in Germany, local-level engagement with Muslim youth in the Netherlands, de-radicalization in Denmark, and

countering recruitment in prisons in France, Germany, and Austria. Many of the projects conducted by member states cross national borders. For example, the project headed by the Dutch (paragraph 3) involved four cities in the Netherlands, one in Germany, and one in the United Kingdom. The Commission's role, and that of the EU's Counter-Terrorism Coordinator Gilles de Kerchove, is to facilitate the sharing of results, including trends and best practices, among all member states, including Central and Eastern European member states which have as yet been generally less concerned or threatened by Muslim radicalization as their more Western counterparts.

15. (U) Recent EU efforts have also focused on increasing external contact to mitigate radicalization at home. Many member states have been working with the International Organization of Migration. The Dutch have begun training imams in Morocco and Turkey for service in Western Europe. These imams can serve as role models, especially to youth, on non-violent religious lifestyles.

16. (U) Lastly, as part of the Action Plan, the EU has developed a handbook for procedures and preventive measures in dealing with the recruitment of radicals in prisons. This project was a joint effort headed by the French, Germans, and Austrians (paragraph 4). A follow-up meeting of ENER to discuss best practices in this area is expected in July.

#### EFFECTS OF LISBON TREATY

17. (SBU) If the Lisbon Treaty is ratified, the Commission, Council, and Parliament will have refined roles in deciding terrorism and radicalization policy. The Parliament will gain co-decision power with the Council on radicalization policy, thus exposing the policy to more scrutiny and a larger audience. Further, these policy areas will move from unanimity voting to

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qualified majority voting, thereby avoiding vetoes by individual member states and speeding up implementation. Although local-level engagement will remain essential to implementation of policies on radicalization, supporters of the Lisbon Treaty assert that these institutional changes will allow for greater oversight and implementation at the European level, especially from the Commission.

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